

Dot Health Digest



Dorchester House: Making Access Easier

Dorchester House is capitalizing on its \$7 million stimulus grant by moving forward with its planned expansion project with all deliberate speed.

(For more information on the grant, search on dotnews.com for “Growth in Work”).

“The primary reason for the expansion,” says Ira Schlosser, Dot House’s Director of Planning, is to “increase access to primary care.”

It is well-known and documented that there is an acute shortage of primary care doctors, and that a lack of access to good primary care is a huge problem for underserved populations. This expansion will in part seek to address that problem.

The expansion will add 17,000 square feet of space, providing more exam rooms for primary care and increasing our urgent care and walk-in capacity.

The extra volume will enable

Dot House to handle a 20% increase in annual visits, and will help us provide low-cost, fast-access services to some who might usually seek health care in expensive hospital emergency rooms.

Schlosser also noted that staying true to the spirit of the stimulus fund is a vital part of the overall project. “This expansion will provide a lot of jobs,” he noted. “In the short term we’ll hire over 50 people to do the construction,

and once we have the space, will permanently hire 22 new staff.”

Additionally, the project is designed to move efficiently so that the money can be injected into the local economy quickly.

“If everything goes smoothly, we’ll break ground by the end of the summer,” Schlosser noted. “The whole thing will take only 12-15 months to complete, and we shouldn’t have to interrupt services for anything.”

Dot House Focuses on Families

Caring for the whole person has always been a central tenet of the Dorchester House approach; now, caring for the whole family is taking on more importance, as well.

In the coming few months, Dot House is offering two exciting programs aimed at creating stronger, healthier families. Both groups are free, and have no eligibility requirements.



Drop-in Mom’s Group

Our new Drop-in Mom’s Group is a great development for the current and expecting mothers in Dorchester.

“This is the first time that we’re doing something like this for new moms,” says Michelle Nadow, the Director of Public Policy. “We’re

hoping that moms see this as a place of support.”

The group, which is possible through our collaboration with

WIC, the Boston Public Health Commission, and the Tufts Foundation, aims to provide support in a nurturing community and a chance to connect with other prenatal mothers.

Dorchester House case managers will provide health education, covering topics like infant care, breastfeeding, depression, nutrition and physical activity.

It will also feature a regular opportunity for mothers to connect and share their experiences.

The group is for any member of the community, not just Dot

House patients! Any language can be accommodated, and there are no income eligibility requirements. The group runs every Friday morning.

(continued on back cover)

Inside this issue:

Stimulus Expansion	1
Dot House Does Parenting	1
Volunteer Spotlight	2
Program Offerings	3
Teen Center Comic	3
Green Corner	3



Volunteer Spotlight

Dorchester House is pleased to highlight some of our excellent volunteers from our Earned Income Tax Credit clinics!

These four young gentlemen: Xavier, Yardley, Randy and Danny, learned how to prepare taxes this past fall in DotWell's Skills for Life course.



From left to right: EITC volunteers Xavier, Yardley, and Randy

There, they learned about personal finance and engaged in career exploration.

Seeking to give back to the community, they signed up as volunteers for the EITC clinics hosted at Dorchester House.

All four young men live in Dorchester. Xavier is in the 12th grade at John D. O'Bryant School. Yardley is an 11th grader at Monument High School. Randy is a 10th grader at English High School, and his cousin Danny is a 10th grader at Boston Latin Academy.

We asked them some questions about financial health and their experience as volunteers. Here are their answers!

What piece of financial information or advice that you learned in the fall has had the most impact on your financial habits?

Xavier: One piece of information which has really impacted me was learning how important saving is. I learned it was vital in case of emergencies and unexpected situations. Ever since, I have been trying to save as often as I can just in case something unexpected comes up.

Randy: I have learned to save money and spend it wisely on what I need. It has also indirectly taught me to finish high school and then college, since many of my clients' incomes (many have no education) are very low, or they are unemployed.

What has your experience volunteering at a tax site been like so far?

Danny: I've had a great experience at the site so far. Everyday is a brand new day, and another day to do even better. The volunteers are all very supportive and helpful, and the clients are patient and cooperative.

Yardley: My experience volunteering at a tax site has been fantastic so far! I love working with new people and

new situations every time I file a tax return for a tax payer. It may seem like I'm just putting information into a computer, but it's more than that—every client is a new story ready to unfold. I learn a lot from just filling out a person's tax return. The environment is also great, the people I work with and that assist me are the best you can ever ask for. Ivy and Phan (the tax site assistants) help us constantly every week to make our experience at the site great. The other volunteers are also a great group of individuals, we all get along well and we enjoy helping others get what is rightfully theirs. The atmosphere is just bright and friendly, and everyday I go to volunteer I have



EITC volunteer Danny

a great time with the new people I meet.

What is your favorite part about volunteering at the tax clinic here?

Xavier: My favorite part of volunteering at the tax site is having the ability to learn new things. I love learning new things and challenging myself to reach new heights. The tax clinic has allowed me to do this and at the same time has allowed me to help my community.

Danny: My favorite part of vol-

unteering at the clinic would have to be the feeling of accomplishment that I get every time I finish a return and get the client their money back. Working at the clinic has been a great confidence booster for me.

If you could share one piece of advice about taxes or finances with other teens, what would you tell them?

Yardley: A piece of advice I can give other teens is to get involved in this great experience of volunteering at a tax site. Everyday is a new experience and it's so fun to encounter it. You also learn a lot at these sites, like the advice Shauntell [the Fiscal Health Coordinator] gave us on how to save money. People make payment plans to pay off something they want to pay, right? Well you if want to buy something and you need to save money in order to do that, why not make a savings plan. Put money away as if you have to pay something, you can give it to your mother, best friend, etc. In the end if you do this well, whatever it is you were saving for, you will have it with this dedication, patience, and a savings plan. You can obtain whatever you want if you learn how to manage your money!

Randy: If I were to share a piece of advice, it would be to save money and spend it on only necessary needs. Fancy shoes and hats? Those can wait. We can invest in books and save it for our future.



Community Offerings

Winter and Spring Featured Programs

For Parents

Drop-in Mom's Group

The Dorchester House Mom's Group offers support in a nurturing community, the chance to connect with other moms, breastfeeding support, and health and parenting education. The group is FREE. (For details call 617-825-0805.)



Nurturing Fathers

Also known as "Dot Dads," this 13-week program helps men of all ages to develop better nurturing skills and become more confident parents and/or caregivers. (For more information call Paul at 617-740-2269.)

EITC Tax Clinic

If you earned less than \$49,000 last year, come have your taxes prepared for free at Dorchester House and Codman Square. (For more information call Shauntell at 617-822-8171.)

For Youth

Step Up To A Healthier You

An after-school program for girls ages 13-18 that are overweight and are interested in finding a healthy weight. The program aims to promote self-empowerment, nutrition awareness, physical activity, and an overall healthy lifestyle. (Call Marika at 617-740-2572 for details.)

Physi-Kids

A fun fitness class for children needing to improve their health. Classes are designed to get kids moving, having fun, and feeling good! Current physical form and permission form signed by parent or guardian are necessary for participation. Classes are Mon.-Thurs., 6-7pm at Healthworks at Codman. Class is FREE of charge! (Call Lauren at 617-825-2800 for details.)

Skills for Life

In this highly interactive class, we will combine lessons in personal finance with career exploration. You will learn the basics of how to prepare tax returns using IRS approved tax software, freeing you from the paid-tax-preparer trap for life! Each student will have the opportunity to receive a stipend if they apply their skills at a DotWell community tax clinic during the tax season. (For more information call Shauntell at 617-822-8171.)

Introducing the Green Corner

Dorchester House has recently retained Banyan Buildings LLC, a Real Estate advisory firm, to identify ways that we can make the organization "greener," that is, become more environmentally and economically sustainable.



With rising utility costs, changes in the world's climate, and a renewed federal focus on the environment, it is more important than ever for buildings to become more efficient and reduce their carbon footprint.

In that spirit, Dorchester House is committed to the environment and the Fields Corner Community with both its expansion project and its existing operations, which will have multiple sustainability initiatives.

Green Corner

This edition's tips for your home:

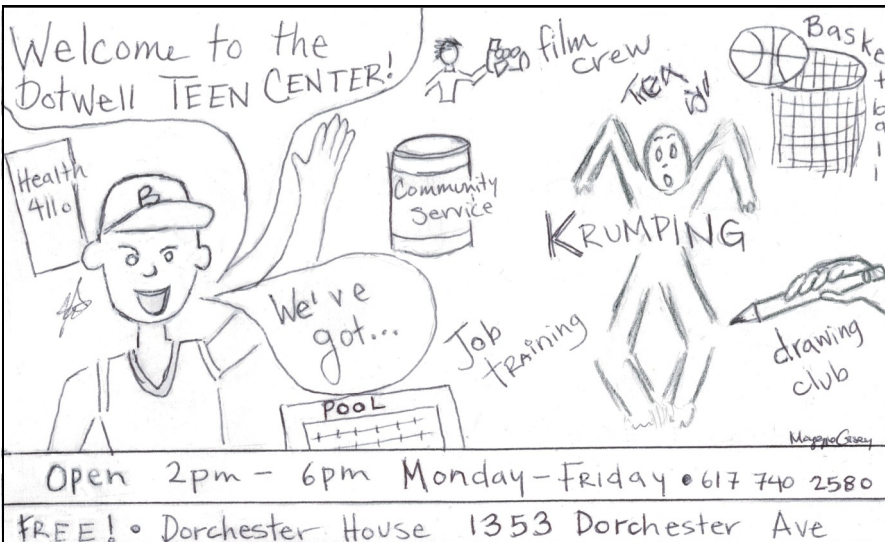
- Keep shades open during the day, and closed in the evening, to retain heat.
- Repair leaky faucets. A steady drip of hot water can waste water and energy to heat the water.

To start, Banyan Buildings will track Dot House's energy use, and help reduce our use and costs over time.

As that happens, we here at Dorchester House want to help the residents of our community be healthy and comfortable in their own homes. This can also have the benefit of saving residents and employees money on their utility bills!

With this in mind we are introducing the "Green Corner," above, which will highlight one Dot House "green" effort, and then provide a tip for residents on how to save money and be more environmentally sustainable in their own home.

Also look for the "Green Corner" in future editions!



Want To Donate?

Visit website for details.



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Health Care and Wellness . . . For Life!

Dot House Focuses on Families (continued)

(continued from front cover)

Dot Dads

In its third year, the Dot Dads group is a Nurturing Father’s program that helps dads improve their parenting skills by reflecting on their own lives and how they were parented.

The program is amazingly well-received by its participants. Said one, “It makes you look at life different. If you are a father, uncle or brother to any young child. It helps you in all your relationships.” Indeed, pre-

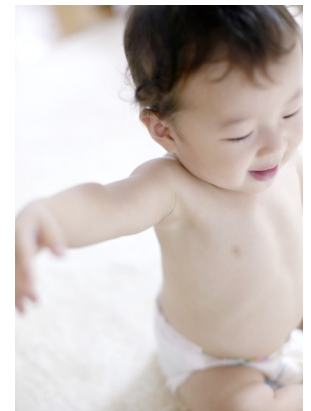


and post-tests show that fathers feel like they improved their understanding of what it

means to be a nurturing father, and developed the skills to be the fathers they want to be.

A partnership with the Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts and with the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester, Dot Dads has no fee or residency requirements. Weekly dinner and childcare is provided. For details and contact information for the Mom’s Group and Dot Dads, see page 3 of this newsletter, or visit the Events

page of our website.



Dot Health Digest

Dot Health Digest is published four times a year by the Dorchester House Multi-Service Center, dedicated to serving the Dorchester community.

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